

NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2026

As we come to the end of the first full week of the new academic year, I would like to say a big welcome back to everyone and extend a particularly warm welcome to all of the pupils and parents/carers of our new S1 cohort. There is no doubt that it has been a really warm summer break with extended periods of glorious sunshine for us all to enjoy; I hope everyone had a lovely summer period.

Once again at the beginning of term, all of our pupils look incredibly smart in their school uniform; it is an impressive sight and I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone for your support in ensuring all of our young people are turned out wearing the correct uniform.

Pupils are settling back into school life very well and are enjoying their learning activities. The support and encouragement that pupils get from parents/carers in relation to their school experience cannot be underestimated and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you once again for your continued support with this. As always, it is important that we work together to support and challenge our learners as they work towards their individual targets this year.

Regardless of whichever year group your child is in, each and every pupil should remain focused, committed, work hard and be ambitious about their learning at all times; this will go a long way to helping them attain and achieve this year.

Punctuality

Our school day begins at **8.50am** and pupils should ensure they are in their period one class by this time. A 'warning bell' will ring at 8.45am. Please ensure your child is in school no later than 8.50am; any pupil arriving after this time will be late for important learning.

During the demolition phase of the 'old' building, pupils coming to school from the direction of Lockerbie Road will continue to be required to access the school via the path created leading around the David Keswick Centre athletics track. Pupils should continue to leave sufficient time to enable them to arrive in school no later than 8.50am.

Pupils (S2 – S6) should also consider timings at lunchtime if they choose to leave the premises for food. Period 6 lessons begin at 1.50pm with a 'warning bell' at 1.45pm; once again, pupils must ensure they return to school on time to begin learning.

Staff Update

With an increasing school roll, there has been a requirement for further staff to be added for the school year ahead. Please note the following:

Sheldon Drover (Maths) and Paige Torrance (Drama) join our team as permanent members of staff.

Liam McCall (History and Modern Studies) started with us as a permanent member of staff back in June when the new timetable began.

Morven Dobie and Ben Mitchell who were both temporary members of PE staff during the last school year, will remain at Dumfries High School after securing permanent contracts.

Lucy Murray (Home Economics) will provide cover each Monday and Wednesday during session 2026/2027.

Nikki Rennie (Business Education) and Anne Keeley (Chemistry) will remain as temporary staff members for the school year ahead.

Debbie Downie (Biology) and Rachel Henry (Chemistry) will undertake the role of Acting PTC Science on a job-share basis during Joady Earle's absence from school.

The following probationer teaching staff have also joined Dumfries High School for the year ahead: Matthew Milroy (Technical), Connor Kelly (PE), Rebecca Middleton (Music), Ineke Case (English), Logan Caldow (Biology) and Allison Brown (History & Modern Studies).

As part of a change across Dumfries & Galloway, Support for Learning Classroom Assistants will now be known as Pupil Support Assistants (PSA).

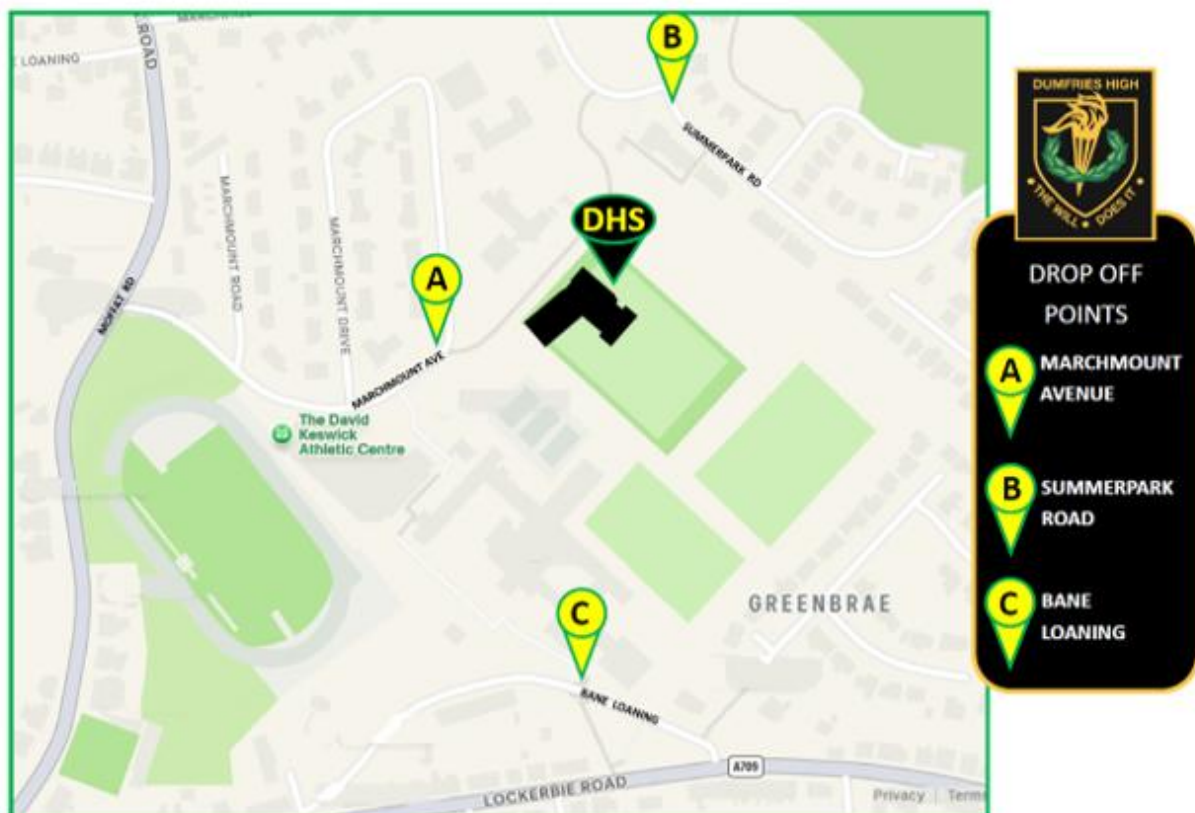
School Car Park – Drop Off and Collections

At the beginning and end of each school day, the area in and around Marchmount Avenue leading up to the school is an incredibly busy area with hundreds of pupils walking around and numerous vehicles travelling in a variety of directions.

When dropping and/or collecting pupils in this area, please be mindful of other vehicles and pupils who may be walking to and/or from school. When leaving at the end of the school day, many pupils have to access the DKC Athletics track entrance on Marchmount Avenue to make their way towards Bane Loaning, Lockerbie Road and beyond. Please be mindful of this when exiting Marchmount Avenue in vehicles at the end of the school day as it is often heavily congested.

Please also note vehicles are not permitted to come up to main school entrance which leads from the bus circle to drop off or collect pupils. Vehicles should not be parked on the road leading to the main entrance as this can cause traffic congestion and impact upon pupil safety.

As a reminder suggested drop off and collection points are detailed below:



DHS 'House' Contacts

All pupils at Dumfries High School belong to a 'House' - Buccleuch, Caerlaverock or Devorgilla. If you have any concerns or queries the following people are the relevant contacts:

	Buccleuch	Caerlaverock	Devorgilla
Pupil Support	Debbie Holmes gw11holmesdebbie @ea.dumgal.sch.uk	Fiona Bryce gw09brycefiona2 @ea.dumgal.sch.uk	Jan Kilmurry gw08kilmurryjan01 @ea.dumgal.sch.uk
Depute Headteacher	Billy Davidson gw08davidsonwilliam @ea.dumgal.sch.uk	Daniella Hogg gw11hoggdaniella @ea.dumgal.sch.uk	Claire Harrison gw08harrisonclaire @ea.dumgal.sch.uk

School Improvement Plan Priorities 2026/2027

Each year every school has to create an improvement plan which identifies areas that the school will focus on for the year ahead. The priorities for Dumfries High School this year are as follows: (i) Transition to New School (Standards and Expectations) (ii) Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap (BGE) (iii) Inclusion, Equality and Wellbeing of all Learners.

Qualifications Scotland Exam Results 2026

Senior pupils received their Qualifications Scotland exam results on Tuesday 4 August. Dumfries High School pupils have, this year once again produced exceptional results across fourth, fifth and sixth year; we must now build upon this for the year ahead.

Fourth Year Exam Data - Percentage of Pupils (of S4 roll) Attaining 5, 6, 7 or 8 National 5 Qualifications

Year	Dumfries High School	D&G Average
2026	65%	43%

- 91 S4 pupils (65% of year group) attained 5, 6, 7 or 8 National 5 qualifications
- 14 pupils in S4 achieved 7A's; 11 pupils in S4 achieved 8A's
- S4 attainment in 2026 is higher than the Dumfries and Galloway average by 22% points

Fifth Year Exam Data - Percentage of Pupils (of S4 roll) Attaining 5 Higher Qualifications

Year	Dumfries High School	D&G Average
2026	20%	14%

- 31 pupils attained five Highers in S5 in 2026;
- 8 pupils in S5 achieved 5A's
- S5 attainment in 2026 is higher than the Dumfries and Galloway average by 6% points

Sixth Year Exam Data - Percentage of Pupils (of S4 roll) Attaining 5 Higher Qualifications

Year	Dumfries High School	D&G Average
2026	31%	24%

- 37 pupils attained five Highers in S6 in 2026
- S6 attainment in 2026 is higher than the Dumfries and Galloway average by 7% points

As can be seen in the tables above, Dumfries High School pupils are performing extremely well and in all cases this year, are performing well above the Dumfries and Galloway average.

I would like to congratulate all of our senior pupils from last year for their fantastic achievements. I would also like to express my thanks to Dumfries High School staff once again for the commitment and support provided throughout the year to all pupils. It is now important that our new S4/5/6 year

groups focus on the year ahead allowing further exam success.

'How to Pass' Evening – Fourth Year

Our '*How to Pass*' evening this year takes place at 6pm on **Wednesday 23 September**. This event is specifically designed to give information to parents/carers of all fourth year pupils about the courses that they are studying this year and importantly, how you can support your child with their learning at home.

This event is specifically for the parents/carers of S4 pupils undertaking National 4 and National 5 study.

This is an extremely important evening in the school calendar and goes a long way to ensuring each and every pupil in S4 can achieve success in the final exams next May. All parents/carers and pupils in S4 should attend this event. Further information will be issued in due course, but please make a note of the date to ensure you can attend.

Stepping up to Higher Evening – Fifth Year

To support our fifth year learners undertaking five Highers, this year we have once again arranged for all pupils to work with an organisation called 'Tree of Knowledge' during an interactive session on **Thursday 5 November**. Workshops that pupils attend during the school day will help to combat the stresses that study in S5 can bring. Managing workload, prioritisation, target setting, focus and motivation will all be addressed to help pupils cope with the demands that the year ahead can bring.

In addition to this, a parent/carer information session has also been arranged for the same evening on Thursday 5 November (6pm). This is for the S5 parents/carers of pupils undertaking five Highers this year and your attendance at this event will go a long way to helping us work together to support our fifth year learners. Further information will follow.

S4/5/6 October Assessment Week (Monday 28 September – Friday 2 October 2026)

As with recent years, all fourth, fifth and sixth year pupils studying National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher courses will undertake a series of subject assessments during week commencing Monday 28 September. A detailed programme of study leading up to this assessment period is crucial to ensure that pupils perform as best they can.

This is an important week of assessments which will help to determine pupil progress at that point. Importantly, it can also help to identify areas of improvement that pupils can address before the prelim exams in January 2027. Please discuss thorough preparation for the October assessment week with your son/daughter and ensure a structured revision schedule is in place.

S4/5/6 Prelim Exams (January 2027)

Prelim examinations for pupils in S4/5/6 will begin on Thursday 7 January 2027 and finish on Wednesday 20 January 2027. Prelim performance is an absolutely vital element to help ensure that all senior phase pupils achieve the best possible outcomes in every course this year. Parents/carers have a crucial role to play within this and once again I would ask for your help to ensure that your child has a programme of study in place at home between now and Christmas.

Behaviour/Standards

The standards and expectations that we have of our pupils will continue to be addressed during House assemblies throughout the school year. School should be a place of fun and enjoyment as well as a place of learning. Punctuality, uniform, exemplary behaviour at all times in and around the school, litter, homework and being prepared for classes are among some of the areas addressed with pupils ensuring they are clear about the expectations we have of them. High standards in these areas will allow all pupils to engage and focus fully on learning activities without disruption. Pupils who make choices not to work towards meeting such standards will be dealt with appropriately and

parents/carers contacted.

Data Capture Forms

It is important that all information we hold in school relating to each individual pupil is as accurate and up-to-date as possible. Data Capture Forms and various consent forms have been sent home with pupils. Please ensure completed forms are returned to registration tutors no later than **Monday 31 August**.

Free School Meals/Clothing Grants

Forms for parents/carers wishing to apply for free school meals and/or a clothing grant should be completed online using the link below. However if you have any issues completing this online, hard copies can be requested from the school office. All details are available on our website or at the following address: <https://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk/schools-learning/schools/school-meals/free-school-meals>

Please use the following email address if you have any queries in relation to free school meals and/or clothing grant payments: educationbenefits@dumgal.gov.uk

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) forms and guidance notes, which are applicable to pupils in S4/5/6, are attached to the email along with this newsletter; paper copies are also available at the main office. In relation to EMA, a fresh application must be made each academic year and submitted with all documentation needed to complete the assessment:

<https://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk/schools-learning/schools/financial-support-education/education-maintenance-allowance-ema>

Please use the following email address if you have any queries in relation to EMA payments: ema@dumgal.gov.uk

Wider Achievement

As a school, we are very keen to be kept informed of pupil successes both in and out of school in order that we can share and celebrate this with staff, other pupils and the wider Dumfries High School community. If your son/daughter has undertaken a particular challenge, completed something amazing or had success in an activity outwith school, please get in touch and let us know. Please follow the experiences and successes of our pupils on our school Facebook page.

Parent Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Parent Council will take place in the main school library on **Tuesday 15 September** at 6pm. If you would like to take part in this meeting, please contact the Parent Council Chair Dr Glidden Chalmers: dumfrieshighschoolpc@gmail.com. A strong Parent Council can have a huge impact upon a school community and we are keen that as many new members join and support the work of the group. Meetings usually last no longer than an hour and it would be fantastic to have more parents/carers as part of the group. I would particularly appeal to new S1 parents/carers to consider joining the DHS Parent Council.

Mobile Phones/Headphones

Mobile phones and/or Headphones should not be visible or used by pupils in corridors when at school. They should also not be used by pupils in a classroom setting unless instructed to do so by a staff member; on occasion, they may be used to aid learning and teaching. When pupils are using mobile phones for personal use they are not engaged in learning and this can cause distractions, disruption and sometimes danger for themselves and others. All pupils have been reminded of this. Pupils may be asked to hand their mobile phone to a member of staff if they fail to follow this clear instruction.

School Photographs

Martin McNae will be in Dumfries High School on Tuesday 15 September and Wednesday 16 September to take school photographs for pupils in all year groups. Family photographs will also be taken for those that indicate a request for this; an email link will be sent in advance to determine this. Martin will also be in school on Tuesday 22 September to catch up with any pupil who is absent when pictures are taken on the two original dates.

Child Protection Concerns

I would like to take the opportunity once again to ensure that our community is aware of the fact that Daniella Hogg (Depute) is the main point of contact within Dumfries High School should a child protection concern ever exist.

Holidays During Term-Time

In recent times there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils taking time out of school during term to attend family holidays; in some cases this can often be a week or longer. Whilst I recognise that in some situations this is unavoidable due to parent/carer work commitments, it is against council policy to authorise this and has an obvious negative impact upon pupil learning.

As always, I would ask for your consideration when booking holidays to minimise the time out of school so that we can work together to support all of our learners as best we can.

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

The MHFA is Dumfries High School's Mental Health First Aid service, aimed at promoting positive mental health in the school community. Please be aware of the support that is available to pupils in relation to any mental health issues, including stress, feelings of uncertainty, anxiousness or low mood. Pupils can contact our fully-trained team using the 'get help' button on the home-page of the school website.

Dates for the Diary

Thursday 27 August	S1 Parents' Information Evening – 6pm in Main Hall
Monday 7 September	S1 Devorgilla Trip – Galloway Activity Centre
Monday 14 September	S1 Buccleuch Trip – Galloway Activity Centre
Tuesday 15 & Wednesday 16 September	School Photographs
Thursday 17 September	Senior Prizegiving – 7pm
Friday 18 September	S1 Caerlaverock Trip – Galloway Activity Centre
Wednesday 23 September	S4 'How to Pass' Evening – 6pm
Monday 28 September	P7 Open Evening
Monday 28 September – Friday 2 October	S4/5/6 October Assessment Week
Wednesday 7 October	S1/2/3 Tracking Reports Issued
Friday 9 October	End of Term
Monday 26 October	New Term Begins

Thursday 5 November	S5 Stepping up to Higher Evening – 6pm in Main Hall
Thursday 12 November	DHS Christmas Fayre (6pm – 8pm)
Friday 13 November	S4/5/6 Interim Reports issued
Tuesday 17 November	S4 Parents' Evening (4pm – 6pm)
Wednesday 25 November	S5/6 Parents' Evening (4pm – 6pm)
Thursday 10 December	S1 Parents' Evening (4pm – 6pm)
Tuesday 15 December	Junior Christmas Ceilidh (S1/2/3: 1.30pm – 3.20pm approximately) Senior Christmas Ceilidh (S4/5/6: 7pm – 10pm)
Friday 18 December	End of Term

The school year we are about to embark on, will be the first one in our brand new building. As a school, we are incredibly lucky to be able to provide learning experiences for our pupils in such an amazing facility. It is important that we continue to work together to both support and challenge pupils as they progress through this year.

As always, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the school if we can help or assist in any way.

Best wishes

